

Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12

OMB-01 AID-20 RSR-01 /100 W
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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8577

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISLAMABAD 2672

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PINS MILI PK

SUBJECTA: ASGHAR KHAN IMPLICATED IN MILITARY PLOT

REFS: ISLAMABAD 2645; LAHORE 336

BEGIN SUMMARY: GOP PROPAGANDIST HAS IMPLICATED FORMER
AIR MARSHAL ASGHAR KHAN IN ALLEGED MILITARY PLOT AGAINST
BHUTTO GOVERNMENT. PLOT, ALLEGEDLY SET TO BE CARRIED
OUT SECOND WEEK OF APRIL, WAS BROKEN UP BY MARCH 30
ARREST OF PLOTTERS. END SUMMARY.

1. SENIOR EDITOR AND PRO- GOVERNMENT PROPAGANDIST H. K.
BURKI CHARGE IN FRONT PAGE ARTICLE IN APRIL 3 PAKISTAN
TIMES THAT FORMER AIR MARSHAL ASGHAR KHAN HAD ADVANCED
KNOWLEDGE OF MILITARY PLOT REVEALED BY GOP ON MARCH 30.
ACCORDING TO BURKI, GROUP OF MILITARY OFFICERS ARRESTED
ON MARCH 30 HAD PLANNED THEIR MOVE AGAINST GOVERNMENT
FOR SECOND WEEK OF APRIL. IN COURSE OF THEIR PRE-
PARATIONS, BURKI ASSERTED, " THEY ARE KNOWN TO HAVE
APPROACHED AT LEAST ONE POLITICIAN" WHO " ENCOURAGED
NO DOUBT" BY THEIR PLANS, ISSUED STATEMENT DEMANDING
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THAT POWER BE TRANSFERRED TO HIS "COTERIE" RATHER
THAN PATRIOTICALLY INFORMING GOP.

2. BURKI REVEALED FACT (WHICH EMBASSY CAN CONFIRM)
THAT COLONEL AFRIDI, ONE OF THOSE ARRESTED MARCH 30,
IS ASGHAR KHAN' S BROTHER- IN- LAW. BURKI ALSO CHARGED
THAT OTHER OFFICERS AMONG THOSE ARRESTED ARE ALSO
RELATED TO ASGHAR KHAN AND THAT " MANY OTHER ARE
CONNECTED WITH HIM IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER".

3. COMMENT: FACTS OF ALLEGED MILITARY PLOT AGAINST
BHUTTO GOVERNMENT STILL VERY HARD TO COME BY. IMPOSSIBLE
TO TELL WHETHER GOP ACTUALLY HAS EVIDENCE IMPLICATING
ASGHAR KHAN OR WHETHER REGIME IS FOLLOWING PRECEDENT
OF IRAQI EMBASSY ARMS INCIDENT IN USING ALLEGED PLOT
TO BELABOR POLITICAL OPPOSITION REGARDLESS OF FACTS.
ADDING SOME CIRCUMSTANTIAL CREDENCE TO BURKI' S CHARGE, ON
OTHER HAND, IS FACT THAT ASGHAR KHAN HAS BEEN MOST
VIRULENT IN HIS PUBLIC ATTACKS ON BHUTTO GOVERNMENT
AND HAS REMAINED ALOOF FROM OTHER OPPOSITION
POLITICIANS AND LATTER' S UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT.
SOBER

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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